

If God's Word is a Priority, Part 2 - Acts 28:16-21 – November 7th, 2010

- This is part two of a series I've titled; "If God's Word is a Priority." This is our final series in Acts, as we complete this amazing book.
- I can't think of a better way to end the book of Acts then to do a teaching on the importance of making God's Word a priority in our lives.
- We're learning from the life of the Apostle Paul as an example to us of what it is to have the Word of God in its rightful place in our life.

- In other words, this is what my life will look like if God's Word is a priority in my life, and we saw what the first one is in verses 11-13.

1. I'll devote time to it (Verses 11-13)

- Here we saw how Paul's devotion to God's Word was a lamp to his feet and light to his path saving everyone from perishing at sea.

2. I'll have a love for it (Verses 14-15a)

- Some brothers from Rome traveled long distance to meet Paul because of their love for him, and the Epistle of Romans written by him.

3. I'll be thankful and encouraged by it (Verse 15b)

- Here, Paul was thankful to God and encouraged at the sight of these Romans, to whom his Epistle had been written three years prior.

4. I'll win souls with it (Verse 16)

16 When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

- v16 After thanking God and being encouraged by these brothers from Rome, Paul is allowed some freedom when they get to Rome.
- Here we're told that upon their arrival in Rome, Paul is allowed to rent his own house and live by himself with a soldier to guard him.
- In other words, Paul is under house arrest, as it were, which would mean that guards would have been chained to Paul all the time.

"He, no doubt, had a house near the Praetorian barracks, and thus enjoyed more liberty than in a prison; but he had a soldier fastened to his arm by a chain, a cause of constant discomfort, however courteous the soldier might be." Charles Spurgeon

"To this soldier he would be lightly chained by the wrist . . . the soldier would be relieved every four hours or so, but for Paul there was no comparable relief." F.F. Bruce

- Now, this is interesting because it would have meant that Paul, instead of being held captive by this guard, now has a captive audience.
- In other words, if you're not a believer in Jesus Christ, and your chained to the Apostle Paul for hours at a time, you're gonna get saved!
- One might ask, how do you know that these guards chained to Paul were actually saved? Because, Paul refers to them in Philippians.

Philippians 4:22 All the saints send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household. NIV

- Suffice it to say, if I, like the beloved Apostle, make the Word of God a priority in my life, I'll win souls to Christ securing their eternal life.

5. I'll speak the truth in it (Verses 17-20)

17 Three days later he called together the leaders of the Jews. When they had assembled, Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I have done nothing against our people or against the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans. 18 They examined me and wanted to release me, because I was not guilty of any crime deserving death. 19 But when the Jews objected, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar-not that I had any charge to bring against my own people. 20 For this reason I have asked to see you and talk with you. It is because of the hope of Israel that I am bound with this chain."

- v17 Three days later Paul assembles the Jewish leaders and tells them his side of the story, and how that he is innocent of all charges.
- v18 He goes on to say that after being arrested in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans, he's released because of his innocence.
- v19 Paul tells them that when the Jews objected, he had no choice but to appeal to Caesar, and that it wasn't against his own people.
- v20 Paul then says that it was for this reason that he called this meeting, and that it's because of the hope of Israel that he's a prisoner.

- It's important to understand that these Jews in Rome had, here-to-fore, only heard lies about everything that happened in Jerusalem.
- I believe that it's for this reason Paul calls together the leaders of the Jews. I suppose you could say that he's setting the record straight.
- Now, the way he's going to do it is to talk about "the hope of Israel," which just so happens to be the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

- Here's what I'm thinking; if God's Word is a priority in my life then, like the Apostle Paul, I will speak the truth of Jesus Christ in it.
- And, in so doing, I will set the record straight as it relates to all the lies that, here-to-fore, people have been deceived and believed.

6. I'll be protected because of it (Verse 21)

21 They replied, "We have not received any letters from Judea concerning you, and none of the brothers who have come from there has reported or said anything bad about you.

- v21 The leaders of the Jews then tell Paul that they hadn't received any letters from Judea, nor any bad reports from anyone about him.
- This is fascinating for several reasons not the least of which is that they should've received a letter given the contract out on Paul's life.
- If you think about it, Jewish leaders in Jerusalem had several months to send this letter to the Jews in Rome warning them about Paul.

- So, "how is it possible that the Jews in Rome would not have received a letter the Jews in Jerusalem would have most certainly sent?"
- In an attempt to answer this, speculation on the part of commentators abounds, and they differ as well. However, one seems plausible.
- The thought is that this letter was sent with the Roman guards who boarded the ship to Rome, but was lost in the shipwreck on Malta.

- In other words, the only letter about Paul to reach Rome was actually a letter from Paul to Rome, which as God's Word, was protected.

Psalms 119:114 You are my hiding place and my shield; I hope in Your word. NKJV